

News Release



Controller of the State of California - Kathleen Connell

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTROLLER'S EDUCATION PLAN TEAMS COMMUNITY COLLEGES WITH HIGH-TECH PLAYERS

Mission College Selected for New Public-Private Partnership

SANTA CLARA, April 21 -- Uniting community colleges with major players in California's technology-based emerging industries is the goal of a new education program launched by State Controller Kathleen Connell today at Mission College. The self-sustaining program, designed to be a national prototype, will utilize existing resources by linking local high-tech companies with nearby community colleges in an effort to better train students and stimulate economic growth.

"Our community colleges are an untapped resource for training Californians to participate in the state's new high-tech-based economy," said Connell, California's Chief Financial Officer. "It is only natural to pair our 106 community colleges with private-sector 'mentors' -- utilizing the infrastructure already in place."

The pilot program calls for five community colleges to partner with companies in what Connell has termed "emerging industries" -- high-tech communications, computer-aided fashion design, new media, international trade and biosciences. Businesses named to the program's statewide advisory board will act as an industry bridge to the community colleges by bringing first-hand industry knowledge into classrooms; offering on-site internships for students *and* teachers; supplying support and technical expertise to develop targeted curricula and loaning state-of-the-art equipment to schools for training.

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Silicon Valley-based executives named to the program's statewide advisory board, and whose companies will work specifically with Mission College on a program to focus on the software component of high tech communications, include Len Parham, Chief Executive Officer of *Integrated Device Technology* and Dr. Glen Toney, Group Vice President, Corporate Affairs for *Applied Materials, Inc.*, both in Santa Clara; and Rich Previte, President and Chief Operating Officer for Sunnyvale's *Advanced Micro Devices*.

"I've met with CEOs from across the state. Their number one concern isn't taxes or even regulation -- it's the quality of the labor force," said Connell. "Many businesses are suffering because California's education system is failing to produce the high-tech workers they need. If we're unable to meet the challenge presented by knowledge-based industries, there is a risk that high-tech California companies may choose to invest their dollars out of state."

Connell also pointed to a recent study by her office that found that California is suffering from an "education gap" that gives cause for concern that our state's education system is not producing enough qualified workers to fill California's future workforce needs.

"The future of education depends on public private partnerships like this one," said Toney. "This program recognizes the fact that for companies like ours to grow and expand in California, we need a trained labor force, prepared to compete in the Information Age."

Connell's program will be supported by legislation she is proposing that is being carried by Assemblymember Ted Lempert (D-Palo Alto). The bill, AB 1149, will offer tax credits to companies that invest in California's colleges by donating the types of equipment used in the workplace, and by helping to fund campus facilities that mirror their own.

"The community colleges don't have the resources right now to purchase the equipment themselves," said Connell. "The passage of this bill will go a long way toward helping students compete, without spending general fund dollars."

Mission College is one of five schools named to the pilot program. Santa Monica College was announced earlier this month. Three additional colleges across the state will be named throughout April, each focusing on a different emerging industry.